

# **EXHIBIT 9**

Letter dated January 23, 1906 to Commissioner of Indian Affairs  
from J.R. Meskimmons

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE,

Carson City, Nevada, Agency.  
January 23, 1906.

The Honorable,  
The Commissioner of Indian Affairs,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:-

I have the honor to report to you in regard to the irrigation of Walker River Indian Reservation.

As stated in my letter of January 16, 1906, there are 1432.21 acres of land now under cultivation upon the Reservation. As has been reported by different Superintendents, Special Agents and Inspectors, the amount of water available from the Walker river is not sufficient to adequately irrigate the land now under cultivation. This is caused by the white settlers of Mason's and Smith's Valleys, on the upper Walker river, taking the water from the river. This seems to be not so much a united effort on the part of the farmers to lay hold of all the water in sight and use it in excess of the needs of the soil, as it is the gradual development of the country, the taking out of new canals and the distribution of the water upon the arid lands.

When the Indians took out their first ditch, known as the Gaxpi-bell ditch, it is said that there was never a lack of water in the river. This was but a small ditch and irrigated only a few acres of land which was irrigated not so much for cultivation as it was for raising wild hay.

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At the time this canal was taken out there was already, I am told, several canals in the upper valleys taken out by the whites, of equal or greater size. However, the Government may be able to secure a priority of right of water to irrigate 300 or 400 acres and a pro rata of the remainder of the water of the river for the other 1000, or so, acres now under cultivation. There are seasons of the year when Walker river furnishes plenty of water for all who wish to take it, but generally speaking, it is not the time of year when water is most needed; paranthetically, I wish to say that a great deal of snow and rain has fallen in the upper highlands and mountains this year, and there is every indication that there will be no lack of water this season.

By reference to the map recently sent you, of the cultivated land on this reservation, it will be seen that the high lands lie close to the cultivated land; that above the cultivated land that is farther up the river, the <sup>mesa</sup> land reaches the river bank and there is little, if any land that can be cultivated above the dam at the head of Canal "A" for several miles. Then the river bottom again widens out and there are a few hundred acres of tillable land. This is the location of the old Campbell ditch, the first ditch taken out by the Indians under Agent Campbell. Later this was abandoned and the Indians moved down the river to about their present location. Below the present tract of cultivated land lies about 7500 acres of reasonably flat land. This is the land referred to by former visiting officials to the reservation.

It is evident that if there is not enough water in Walker river to irrigate the land already under cultivation, that it is necessary to look to other sources to irrigate the tract of land just mentioned

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than the ordinary flow of the river. Either by arbitration proceedings or suit in equity it would be impossible to secure water from Walker river except flood or excess water for land which has, as yet, never had water applied to it.

There are three sources from which to choose in order to secure water for this tract: 1st, The storage of flood waters of the river; 2d, the pumping from wells upon the tract; 3d, the pumping of water from the lake. Of the first I would say the conditions are poor for storing enough water to irrigate the land mentioned. There is no reservoir sight of much value on the Walker river below Mason valley, and I understand that the Reclamation service have under investigation and consideration the location of a storage reservoir in Antelope valley on the head waters of the river. I am not prepared to say just what conclusion has been reached in regard to the matter.

C) The second proposition--there is little doubt in my mind as to it being the best of the three mentioned, providing that wells of sufficient capacity can be secured. The surface indications are such as would lead one to believe that the pumping from wells together with ditches from the river to be used during the time of floods would be a success. However, the only way that one could tell would be to put down a test well or wells in order to learn the condition of the underground water bearing strata. The surface water of the reservation is but about 15 feet, on the average, below the surface of the ground, and for about 190 feet--the depth of the railroad well at Schurz--there is found water bearing material; of its character, however, I cannot say definitely as I have not been able to secure a log of the well just mentioned. It is a 5" or 6" well from which is pumped a very good supply of water for railroad use,

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but of course would be adequate to irrigate only a few acres of land. At Wabuska, in the Walker river valley about 30 miles above Schurz, is another railroad well which overflows; this is deeper than the well at Schurz, it being, it is said, over 200 feet deep. From this it would seem that there is a possibility of getting flowing wells on the Indian reservation. If this could be done, of course the problem of irrigation would be quickly and easily solved. Of the third proposition, that of pumping water from the lake, there are elements of success which do not appear on the surface of the second proposition. The contour line which forms the upper boundary of the tract of land in question is 52 feet above the present surface of the lake. If water was pumped from the lake there would be an abundance to use, but the lift would be so great that it would hardly pay. The canal system would cost more, but the pumping plant itself would cost less, as there would need to be only one central pumping plant and no transformation of power from steam to electricity with its attendant loss, as would be the case if pumped from wells. On the other hand it is expected that purer water would be secured from wells than the lake water and the indications are that the lift would be such as to make it a commercial proposition, i. e., of not more than 25 or 30 feet.

With a view of putting down a test well or wells, and if successful, of boring other wells sufficient to irrigate this land, I have been in conversation with, and correspondence with several men who make a business of well drilling, and as yet I have not been able to find one who was willing to sink a well upon the reservation at a reasonable amount per foot. The proposition made by all of them is that the Department buy the machinery, furnish the casing and hire

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them by the day to do the work, thus throwing the responsibility of losing the tools, &c., upon the Department.

I have written Engineer Code to know whether or not he knows of a man who has an outfit whom we could secure to put down a well at so much per foot; as yet I have not had a reply, but I think it doubtful if we can secure a man upon those terms. The shipping of machinery to the reservation with the attendant uncertainty of the amount of work which could be secured for the future makes it hardly possible to secure a man upon the terms mentioned above.

Because of the above conditions I would be in favor of the Department buying a portable well drill outfit capable of boring a hole 1000 feet deep; this would cost laid down at Schurz not to exceed \$5000.00, some rigs costing considerable less, and the hiring of men to put down a well or wells for the pumping above indicated. As yet I am not prepared to make a detailed estimate of the expenses attendant upon the same.

If wells could be secured over this tract of land, as I hope they may, and as surface showings indicate that they can, it would be necessary to install a central power plant near the railroad where fuel oil could be received in car load lots. This plant would consist of an up-to-date steam plant for burning oil and a dynamo which would generate power to be distributed to motors direct connected to centrifugal pumps in wells located most advantageously over the tract. Estimating the maximum lift of 40 feet and maximum distance for transmission at seven miles, this plant could be installed for a sum not exceeding \$45,000.00, not including the cost of well and building. It will be understood that this is not<sup>a</sup> definite estimate, as the data upon which to base the same is only assumed. A plant

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upon the bank of the lake to pump the water from the lake into a canal that it might be distributed over this tract by gravity would cost in the neighborhood of \$35,000.00. The distribution system of this would cost considerable more than that of the other proposition. A map showing in contour the location of the land above mentioned will be forwarded to you in a few days.

I will proceed as rapidly as possible in the matter of getting together data for the cost of sinking those test wells, and forward the same to you as soon as completed.

Very respectfully,

*W. H. H. H. H. H.*  
Supr. Irrigation and S. D. A.

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**FIELD SERVICE.**

January 24, 1906.

J. R. Meskimore,

Supt. Irrigation and S. D. A

Reports on the Irrigation of Walker  
River Indian Reservation.

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